

Linda Reinhart LCSW

24 Old Clyde Park Road
Livingston, MT 59047
Cell: (406) 223-7097

January 29, 2009

Dear Madam Chair Honorable Representative Teresa Henry and the Health and Services Committee:

I'm Linda Reinhart from Park County in support of the funding requests for community mental health services. Thank you for the mental health initiative funding that increased the Mental Health Services Plan which has helped many receive services locally preventing costlier care. Thank you for our new recovery based drop-in center. Park County had a 2006 rate of suicide of 27.1 persons per 100,000 which is improved from a 2000 rate of 29 per 100,000 which is almost triple the national average. In our small community those statistics are people we knew and deeply miss.

In Park County we know the importance of a coordinated comprehensive specialized mental health team delivering best practice programs. From our psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse practitioner overseeing medications, therapists doing thorough assessments, our DBT groups, our strengths based case managers to our drop-in peer support specialists being present with someone expressing suicidal ideation to the most important person, the client – our team approach is effective. There are incidences where persons have gone to non-mental health professionals for depressive symptoms and who were automatically given an antidepressant that made the situation worse when a more thorough specialized assessment would have realized that the symptoms were part of a bipolar disorder where using certain antidepressants could trigger a manic reaction. Please maintain funding supporting our comprehensive community mental health care including funding the drop-in center at the 2009 level.

Here are a couple of brief snippets from letters from persons not able to be here today:

Sarah writes: "I need the psychiatrist, the nurse, Mountain House and the drop-in center, DBT and Medicaid for my medications. I do not wish to be homeless or in the hospital. Please help me and others like me."

Richard writes: "I'm utilizing group therapy, guidance, advice and general assistance for my challenges. I get all that here -my mental, physical and spiritual needs are addressed. I have been able to stay out of the state hospital and live in my own apartment. Please do what you can to continue funding community mental health services including medication, therapy, case management and programs like Mountain House and the drop-in center."

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.
You have my respect and gratitude,

Linda Reinhart LCSW

Dear Chair and Members of Committee:

EXHIBIT _____

DATE _____

HB _____

I am a composer and singer.
I need the psychiatrist, the
nurse, mountain house, drop-in
Center, therapist, and DBT ^{and Medicaid for} to my needs
Stay alive. I do not wish to
be homeless ^{or in the hospital.} Please help me and
others like me. God has blessed me
all of my life and I have faith
in Him completely. I do appreciate your help.
Sara Crook

EXHIBIT _____
DATE _____
HB _____

January 28, 2009

Richard Bunn
107 South 2nd, #339
Livingston, MT 59407

Dear Madam Chair – Honorable Representative Teresa Henry and the Health & Human Services Committee:

Thank you for funding community mental health. I have been getting services from the mental health center in Livingston, Montana and am grateful for all the support I have received. I had been in a multi – million dollar hospitals in Huntsville, Alabama and other states and did not find the community support I needed until I came to Montana in 2002. I have found no other mental health center in my sixty years of suffering that helped me and no better mental health center than here in Livingston, Montana.

There is no better facility than Livingston, MT for support and for programs well suited for my personal development and healing and no better qualified staff anywhere that I have been in my tri-state experience in trying to find help.

I'm utilizing group therapy, guidance, advice and general assistance for my challenges in living. I get that all here – my mental physical and spiritual needs are addressed. I have been able to stay out of the state hospital and maintain living independently in my own apartment since being here.

Please do what you can to continue funding community mental health services including medication management, therapy, case management, and programs like Mountain House and the drop-in center.

With much gratitude,

Richard S Bunn

Richard Bunn

Eleanor E. Wend M.Ed.

E-mail: ewendesq@yahoo.com

PO Box 1914, Livingston, MT 59047 • 406-220-0183 (cell)

EXHIBIT _____

DATE _____

HB _____

January 29, 2009

To the Chairperson and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing with respect to the level of funding for Mental Health services in the 2009-11 Montana state budgets. I am in favor of maintaining the current level of funding and programs with a Cost of Living increase included. I believe the programming suggested by the AMDD division which emphasizes 'Least Restrictive' locally-based mental health teams is the most cost-effective and effective approach for the citizens of Montana and maintaining mentally healthy communities.

If it is possible, I support an expansion of 'least-restrictive', locally-based mental health programming with an increase for Drop-in center and 24 hour access to help teams and CRT's. I believe it has been demonstrated repeatedly that this approach is the most cost-effective both in dollars spent on emergency response and for the members of the community. The cost for one intervention which involves 911 and ambulance, emergency room and transport to institutions will easily fund the operations of a drop-in center solution with a local CRT response.

I am personally acquainted with the Mental Health system in Park and Gallatin County and have seen both the successes with local intervention and the failure with attempted and successful victims of suicide. The stress on the victims, our local emergency systems and ultimately the failure of these systems to save lives is glaring and costly. I am extremely grateful that there has been funding of the MHSP program for those who are ineligible for Medicaid and also the local Day treatment and Drop-in programs here in Livingston. Again I support the continued funding of these programs with a cost of living increase.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,


Eleanor E. Wend. M.Ed.